Exploring How Animals Are Viewed in Society Over the Past 150 Years Within Classic Children's Literary Works

Ambrosia Keefe

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

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Exploring How Animals Are Viewed in Society Over the Past 150 Years Within Classic Children’s Literary Works.

An Undergraduate Thesis

By Ambrosia Keefe

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Introduction:

Literary works, fiction or non-fiction have helped change the way people envision, consider, display change through time, and function with animals since people had time to sit down and read a book. However, within the last century there have been a plethora of remarkable works of literature that have greatly influenced society. These books have been used by many to teach children valuable lessons. Sometimes, like in the case of *Black Beauty*, people “passed copies of the book to horse drivers and stable hands” to help improve how they treated their animals (Norris, 2012). In the case of *Black Beauty*, although first printed in 1877 this work by Anna Sewell still holds as one of the most favored children’s books. There have even been movies created about the story for it to reach newer, non-literary, generations.

I believe that it is the literary works of childhood, being passed on from generation to generation and teaching lessons through books, that have brought about the societal change in attitudes towards animals that we see today. My own experience illustrates this phenomenon, as my father noticed my passion for animals early on and encouraged me to read many books with an animal focus. I had the immense joy of reading *Black Beauty* several times with him. It changed my perspective just as it changed dozens, if not hundreds, of other people’s perspectives on how animals view the world. One of my favorite quotes from the book is; “Master said, God had given men reason, by which they could find out things for themselves; but he had given animals knowledge which did not depend on reason, and which was much prompter and more perfect in its way, and by which they had often saved the lives of men. ” (Sewell, p. 42). This short complication of words gives the reader two things to take away. One, that
animals have an insight into cognitive thought. They can think about what is said to them and understand that they are being treated a certain way, but most times lack the knowledge of why. Second, that there are different types of people in this world; ones with an ability to love animals and others who simply use them for their own purpose. This short quote gives the reader the ability to see that just because humans possess a superior intellect and have the capacity for reason does not mean they know anything about knowledge. The way a man acts in reverence to animals means more than all the reasoning in the world.

Just like Black Beauty there are dozens of other truly remarkable works of literary genius that have stood the test of time to become “great”. A lot of these pieces are involving or centered around animals. Which begs the question as to why, out of all the things to write about, have authors chosen animals to be the focus of literary works to teach lessons, and alter awareness of how we as a society of humans should be acting towards our world and one another. The answer to this question is simple and was even addressed by Gandhi who said: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” (Goodreads). It is so easy to judge a nation by how animals are treated and regarded because animals are so pure within themselves. For instance, I have a small kitten and she normally receives cuddles from me currently of the evening. I am writing this paper and she is visibly upset that our cuddles time is being diminished, she is pouting on the other side of the couch and looking at me with her big green eyes. There was a time when people would write this off as her just receiving a lack of attention and that being the reason she’s upset, that it wouldn’t matter to her if it was me or a stranger who came in to cuddle her as long as
she got the attention. However, since I was encouraged to read certain works, like *Black Beauty* I believe that she is truly attached to me and that she has emotions just like humans. That she legitimately feels put off that I am not giving her the usual attention at the usual time.

Literary works involving animals can be attributed to this overall change in thought regarding animals. The works have brought to light what animals feel and how they act towards us as humans can be explained by their treatment. Also, that humans have much to learn from their furry friends. There can be lots of knowledge of kindness, patience, and love bestowed on humanity if animals are observed properly, and how lucky are we currently that most of these lessons to learn have already been documented for our entertainment in the form of books!

Regarding this thesis, it will be comprised as a literary review of how Animals’ are viewed in society, and how that society has changed over time within the last one hundred and fifty years to encompass lessons of the literature as well as the progression of literature. This is an important topic because of how it has permeated society entirely over time. With *Black Beauty* being the main example of this portion of the thesis, it has been a childhood and adulthood favorite for over one hundred years with the original being published in 1877. The mere presence of animals has changed society over the past century and a half in many ways. Think about the family dog for a moment, how much they are loved, cared for, spoiled with everything imaginable, this simply wasn’t the case for a long time, “one hundred years ago, nearly all dogs were kept for herding, pulling power, hunting, tracking, or protection and were seldom allowed in the house, almost never in the bedroom” (Anderson, Censhare). Now, the family dog
has taken up many of the decisions within the household! Just looking on social media and all the posts, there are even pages dedicated to the family dog or pet, this change in societal thinking is unashamedly evident. There are more changes of animals within society than just the family dog, and I propose that these changes are due, not entirely but in large part, to how they are portrayed within classic literary works presented during childhood.

Although it may be well known that animals have changed within society over the past one hundred and fifty years there is still a need to provide some perspective on why animals have changed in society. Some believe it may be because of the rise of animal activist groups making a change in the governments. However, for anything to have such a widespread and lasting impact it must be more personal than a government policy. The change must start at home. Individual people with individual thoughts and actions going out of their way to make a change within their own life is how things truly stand the test of time. This brings on the question of how can this be accomplished? Which is where my thoughts on the literary works over the past century and a half come into play. I believe that it is the literary works of childhood being passed on from generation to generation, teaching lessons through books, that has brought about the societal change we see today. With the current movements of social constructs, it is beneficial to understand where the root for these thoughts have come from. The different ways that the view of animals has changed has an octopus arm effect within social constructs, and to connect the present and the past. Mastering an understanding of the history of these connections and how they came to be so prevalent within society is important to understand where they may lead in the future and how to
change things within a society. How these connections of animals and their impact on society will change and adapt into other actions and viewpoints just as animals in literature have helped create the wonderful time of animal knowledge we are in today.

Given my belief that children’s literature can affect change across generations, it is important to assess literature to determine how the society’s perspective on animals has changed over the past 150 years. Hopefully, with this question answered there may be some further insights as to how the previous literature can help inform future decisions and actions involving animals. The literary history of the purpose of animals, their role in society and how they are thought of can also give clues as to where animals may be going within the next generation. Understanding how society has changed and the way it will most likely change in the future is critical for businesses, government, and educational decisions, to properly prepare for the future which is coming sooner than most may think.

In order to answer this question and analyze the literature properly, several books have been collected and more scientific papers as well. It should be noted that not all are children’s books, which was deliberately done to show the progression over time of the children’s book’s ideas coming to fruition within adulthood. The titles are as follows: *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, and *The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel. These works will be read, dissected and analyzed to gain insight to the overarching themes of how the animals are viewed in society at the time of the publication. As the works span many different portions of history over the last century and a half there will be an ability to see how the
overarching themes have changed and consequently how society has altered its view of animals.

**Materials and Methods:**

This is a thesis that uses Cultural Analysis through the lens of a literary review. “Cultural analysis is particularly valuable in understanding changes in society, and in gaining insights into the success of failure of institutions and structures to adapt to change” (Toner 2000). A focus of my thesis is how society’s views have changed and may change in the future because of the influence of the selected literary works. Of course, there are literally thousands of pieces of literature that could be chosen, so I intend to highlight some of the most popular “animal” works to gain a broad view of their historical and potential impact. This overarching scope on appropriate literary works will be a key in maintain objectivity within this thesis.

For the analysis, I will identify and note key ideas, concepts, and examples for each work, and consider how these points are associated with contemporary cultural changes within a society. Toner in 2000 explains how to conduct such an analysis emphasizing that; “it is important to write down...as much of the actual language as possible, rather than putting ideas into your own words”. In part this means that there will be lots of quotes within this thesis to let the literary works being analyzed speak for themselves. These quotes will support the premise that ideas from these books have driven societal attitudes and that my interpretations of an author’s intent are supposed that that authors words.

The use of pertinent quotes as a basis for identifying key concepts in animal-human relationships provides a mechanism to help avoid misrepresentation or
interpretation. Beyond the entirety of the quote, I will further consider the use of language, especially value-laden descriptive terms, to characterize the author's perspective on animals, humans, and specific interactions. This approach allows for building a form of database reflecting key ideas and attitudes in a given work. To further form this database, I will “get out a pair of scissors and cut each excerpt out…sort the pieces of paper into similar topics” (Wiley Network). I will end up using highlighters and post it notes for quotes instead of cutting them out; however, this is a similar idea to what Wiley has presented. I will isolate the ideas and organize them before I write to gain organization and insight into the literature through the lens of cultural analysis.

From this database, my purpose is to select the ideas from the books, display them in a concise paper, and then analyze them for easier understanding. As well as analyzing direct quotes, I also will analyze themes common to many books and use the quote database to explore and document these themes that recur in different works at different times. This analysis will display the author's overall intention in a book and can be used to consider how readers may interpret themes in a book.

Obviously, the choice of literary work can have a huge influence on the analysis. My plan is to use Google, available lists of animal-related children’s book, my own experience and that of my advisor. From these sources, we decide what we think are the most representative, historically prominent, most reprinted, and most significant Children’s Animal Classics would be. Collaborating by asking this question into Google we came up with a list of about four books including: Animal Farm, Black Beauty, Call of the Wild, Life of Pi, and White Fang. Then, to add more depth to the thesis and how the ideas and themes presented within these works of literature matured through society
outside online sources were utilized for social context of the literary works. All these books span a time frame from a first publication of 1877 to 2001. This gave a broad scope of the time frames to allow a proper scope of time for the question of animal’s role in society being changed with classic literature.

After choosing the publications to analyze “a content analysis was...done on the major activities of the central characters in each book” as well as the overall themes the books portrayed of the role of animals (Kortenhaus, et al. 1993). To keeps everything straight among all the books being analyzed, about 4 books total, and all the articles post it notes were used to mark pages of theme identifying quotes or important progression of characters. The front of each book was marked with the year of first publication date, to maintain some order of reading as well as writing up the analysis for each title. From there, the pulled quotes and themes were written down and run by the thesis advisor/reader to ensure that the overall topic was being maintained.

In addition to the several books being used in the analysis, I will also examine scholarly papers regarding the individual books. Scholarly works will be considered after I do the initial analysis of texts, to avoid bias in my conclusion and to provide a form of independent assessment relative to the conclusions I find. Much like the Black Beauty example was referenced by papers in the introduction. All the other children’s books will follow suit in this fashion. Black Beauty of course will be covered again with more detail later in the paper. These further forms of analysis using other papers will provide more than personal insight to how the themes and messages of the selected books have impacted lives over time.
Black Beauty:

Black Beauty was released in 1877 by Anna Sewell. It “was written in the last years of Sewell's life” (Norris, 2012). Sewell “was a Quaker born in Yarmouth, England” she followed her mother, Mary Wright Sewell, to become a writer (Norris, 2012). When Sewell first wrote the book Black Beauty, she intended for it to send a message to adults who controlled how horses were cared for in order to better improve their treatment (Norris, 2012). Instead her work became immortalized as a children’s book. Which brings its purpose into this thesis. The classic literary work has influenced children for one-hundred and forty-two years and counting. Within this section I will discuss what parts of the book are direct indications of the societal impact it had as well as use outside sources to establish credibility and cement the ideas presented.

Sewell developed the character of Black Beauty over the course of his life from a foal through his retirement. Over the course of his lifetime he interacted with various kinds of people, doing every possible career a horse could do for humans such as a pleasure horse, carriage horse, a cart horse, a family horse for multiple purposes, as well as his last official carrier which was a grain mill horse. He eventually found his favorite owner, who was a child the last time that they were together, and that is where he spent his retirement. In the first few pages Black Beauty’s mother told him: “there are a great many kinds of men; there are good, thoughtful men … there are bad, cruel men … there are a great many foolish men, vain, ignorant, and careless, who never trouble themselves to think … A horse never knows who may buy him, or who may drive him” (Sewell, Pg. 12). This is the first real image the readers get about what Black Beauty looks forward to in his future owners. The last line of it specifically packs a lot of
meaning and emotion which is easily conveyed to the readers that the horses not only can think for themselves, but also have trepidations about who will own them. With the main point in the book being that horses have feelings the notion that they are nervous about who will own them is a huge takeaway for the audience. As mentioned in the introduction, *Black Beauty* was passed around to cab drivers and other horse owners around England. With the knowledge that horses do not know who will possess them and that they have feelings drives the readers to desire to be the good owners that Black Beauty’s mother describes.

Later, Anna Sewell begins to describe what it is like to be a horse. The beginning few chapters Black Beauty spends significant time with his mother on the farm that he was born. He loves this time, and it is here that he learns how to be a good horse, like his mother. He learns to be patient, and obedient even when it becomes tough to do. This makes him patient and quick favorite of his owners in the future. At Birtwick Park, his second home in his life, he meets some friends whom he will remember fondly throughout his whole life. One of those friends in Ginger, she is described as a beautiful, but harsh chestnut mare. At one point they are in the barn discussing how they were broken in. Ginger had a very different time compared to Black Beauty; she explains, “the first experience I had of men’s kindness, it was all force” (Sewell, p. 23). Although not much can be found except about a selection of some “great” horse trainer tactics of the time period. It can be assumed that Sewell is producing a direct opposite, for the audience to compare, of Black Beauty. Harsh training tactics would be around back in the 1800’s as well as today. That is the nature of life, there are always harsher and softer methods of training animals. Ginger may be just a supporting character, but she
is ever-present throughout the story. From the very start of Black Beauty’s life till right before the end. She continues to resist humans over her lifetime, “They always think they can improve upon Nature and mend what God has made” (Sewell, p. 37). This portion of the story is discussing the next owners that Black Beauty is owned by who using him and Ginger for show horses in his carriage. The owner continues to put the horses in difficult harnesses and predicaments that inhibit the horses breathing, and their ability to pull the carriage effectively. She becomes increasingly frustrated with the owners of this farm and eventually she revolts against them and bites the driver of the carriage and refuses to be placed into the harness. Eventually, Black Beauty sees her for the last time he sees her being badly abused by an owner who overworks her without any concern for her well-being or health as a cart horse. She is described that her “once arched and glossy neck was now straight and lank, and fallen in, the clean straight legs and delicate fetlocks (ankle area on the horses legs) were swelled; the joints...grown out of place with hard work; the face, once so full of spirit and life, now full of suffering” (Sewell, p. 155). This is another very powerful moment for the readers. It was not too long ago in the story that she was described as one of the most beautiful horses Black Beauty had ever seen. Now, she has been abused to such a degree that she has been deformed by the work she’s done. Black Beauty is also a cart horse at this time, but he is cared for by a poor family to the best of their ability. While they are next to each other they share a brief chat about why she is no longer resisting her owners the way she did near the beginning of the story. She simply responds: “I did once, but it’s no use; men are strongest, and if they are cruel and have no feeling, there is nothing that we can do, but just bear it, bear it on and on to the end” (Sewell, p. 156).
This is one of the most heartbreaking parts of the story for me. She has had not only her body broken by abuse of cruel humans overworking her, but she also has had all her spirit stolen. She was once a vibrant, living being only to be consumed by sadness and suffering. The next time that we see Ginger, she will be dead on a cart, being pulled through town as Black Beauty passes her in his own cart.

Lamentably, this was a common trend for cart horses in the 1800’s. The distinction that Black Beauty and his friends spend much of their life as cart horses of some form is not a mistake. Adriana Dandridge says “Most horses were over-worked, and some were abusing the animal. People acted viciously to the animal knowing that it was helpless and couldn’t defend itself” (Dandridge, 2015). The difference between the over-worked and abused horse versus one that may have been better taken care of is evident in the difference of Black Beauty and Ginger. The story ends decent for Black Beauty. He is eventually bought at an auction by a young boy, grown to a man, that he knew earlier in his life. This boy always showed him the ultimate kindness in his life. This boy purchased him, after a lifetime of hard work, and gave him a pasture to retire to. Black Beauty ends the story by explaining that “I shall never be sold, and so I have nothing to fear; my troubles are all over, and I am at home” (Sewell, p. 193). The story ends impeccably well for Black Beauty. He ends up finding a place where his only job is to be a horse for the rest of his days.

However, for the time period this was rare. In fact, Black Beauty “became a children's classic and an animal rights manifesto” (Norris, 2012). It was wildly publicized by common people taking a liking to the story and passing it around to other cab drivers,
and common folk in London. Eventually the story gained so much popularity that it traveled overseas and was instantly a favorite in America.

**The Call of the Wild:**

Jack London was a very popular writer for creating stories that involve the roughness of America during the frontier days. His stories are raw and unfiltered. The two most prominent ones consist of mountaineers in the early nineteen hundred and the story of how dogs helped to save their lives in the wilderness. For the purpose of this thesis *The Call of the Wild* will the focus out of his two most iconic books for the following reasoning is. First, *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* were published 3 years apart from each other. With the focus of the thesis being a progression over 150 years it would be more beneficial to single the one out that has more relevance for the topic since the stories are representative of the same diminutive era for the scope of time being interacted with. Secondly, the book focused on a man, named Thornton who takes ownership of an abducted house dog named Buck. The book follows Buck’s story as he is thrown into the Klondike Gold Rush and the jarring reality of frontier life (americanliterature.com). For the purpose of this thesis question (the progression of animals among Children’s books and society over 150 years) this book was superior to *White Fang* for the purpose of this analysis.

The main character of this book is a St. Bernard-Scotch Shepard which is commonly known as a Leonberger breed, named Buck. This breed of dog is known for its huge size, weighing up to one-hundred and seventy pounds as a full-grown male, in addition to the deep bark, and lion-looks it makes the ideal watchdog (dogtime.com). Within Jack London’s story Buck was an aristocrat’s guard dog to protect the children.
This was the only life he had known; “during the four years since his puppyhood he had lived the life of a sated aristocrat; he had a fine pride in himself, was even a trifle egotistical” (London, p. 6). The language alone in this quote shows how high class of a life Buck was leading before his life changed forever. It was the only life he had every known, since he was a small puppy. Because of this lifelong mollycoddled life, he is proud of his stature in society. This gives two things to the audience; one, that canine’s have a hierarchy system amongst themselves for his stature in society to cause him so much pride; two, that the animals are self-aware of what they have in this life relative to their owner’s success and stature in society. In fact, Buck has such a concern about the impression society has on his life that he is described by London as being “egotistical”. Which, according to the Dictionary means that he is “excessively conceited or concerned with oneself; self-centered” (google dictionary). For a time in society where animals were considered in an overwhelming majority for what they brought to humans, the notion that a simple watchdog would be so self-aware is a formidable statement for London to make.

The Klondike Gold Rush “led over 100,000 people from all walks of life to abandon their homes and embark on an extended, life-threatening journey across treacherous, icy valleys and harrowing rocky terrain” (History.com, 2018). The treacherous nature of the terrain in the untamed woods of the Canadian Yukon Territory made transportation a nightmare for the prospectors that were flocking to the area. These hundreds of thousands of people needed a way to move around the snowy and icy terrain other than on foot. They also needed an approach to move the gold they were risking their life to find. The solution was a dog, but not any dog, a “heavy dog,
capable a running for a long time, and resisting the cold and the snow” (Franchette, 2016). These unique and specific lists of characteristics meant that the “number of dogs fitting the adventure…made these type of dogs rarer, and valuable” (Franchette, 2016). These historical indicators set the scene for the biggest change in Buck’s life. The moment he is captured to go be one of these Klondike Gold Rush dogs. Some men saw Buck from the yard and they immediately knew that he would be worth a lot of money when sold for the Gold Rush. Buck is described as a kind mannered dog that did not turn to violence in his civilized life. However, when the strange men come to take him, he changes his character to resort to violence to defend himself against the men’s weapons. When the men got close to him he reacted to defend himself even though they had a club and continued to beat him down with it, “With a roar that was almost lionlike in its ferocity, he again hurled himself at the man” (London, P.11) This simple one line is filled with the themes that are to come. The “lionlike” ferocity is an indication that Buck is changing his voice to a wild and primitive version of himself. When he “hurled himself at the man” this is showing that even though he is being shown a level of violence completely unknown to him he is continuing to rebel against it. Earlier in the chapter he was described as a gentle, loving animal and this one interaction with violence changed him forever. Which is showing that the treatment of animals changes how they treat humans in return.

After Buck is stolen from his home where he grew up there are distinct changes that cause Buck to stand out among the other dogs being used by the gold rushers. He learns very quickly, and he remembered often the theft, knowing that it “marked Buck as fit to survive…it marked his adaptability, … capacity to adjust himself to changing
conditions, … the decay or going to pieces of his moral nature, a vain thing and a handicap in the ruthless struggle for existence" (London, P. 21-22) Buck was able to survive the new life he was thrust into because he could adapt to violence, and the foreign culture of being a wilderness sled dog rapidly. He learned to bring out his inner violence that had always been laying dormant within his soul. He learned to be violent and primitive in all aspects of his life, including hunting; “He was ranging at the head of the pack, running the wild thing down, the living meat, to kill with his own teeth and wash his muzzle to the eyes in warm blood” (London, P. 34) This violence and newfound ability to kill another animal came about because of his treatment from the men who stole him. He lived a hard, violent and tortured life until he met two different beings; Thornton who was the human that showed him real love, and the wolf pack that he would eventually consider his family.

Thornton came about and changed Buck’s soul. Up until this point in the story, Buck had been mistreated by nearly every human that encountered him from the moment he was stolen from his puppyhood home. Thornton showed him real, genuine kindness and love that changed his heart and made him respond to only Thornton with the same level of adoration and devotion. Thornton and Buck shared a special bond with each other that was not mutual among anyone else in both of their lives. This is prevalent in a short interaction; “John Thornton and Buck looked at each other. ‘You poor devil,’ said John Thornton, and Buck licked his hand” (London, P. 60). Buck would never usually lick the hand of a human because often that same hand would be holding a club in the next moment to strike him, similarly Thornton would not show favoritism to certain dogs because they were working animal. However, in this moment the two torn
hearts are mended together to form a beautiful friendship that would last up until Thornton’s death. There was nothing that Buck wouldn’t do for Thornton as illustrated here: “his love seemed to grow and grow. He, alone among men, could put a pack upon Buck’s back in the summer traveling. Nothing was too great for Buck to do, when Thornton commanded” (London, P. 65). Buck had an unconditional loyalty and love for Thornton that he had never shown to another human all because Thornton was willing to give the same love and loyalty back to Buck. When Thornton died Buck is described as feeling a strong physical pain, “It left a great void in him, somewhat akin to hunger, but a void which ached and ached, and which food could not fill” which is yet another illustration of the love and loyal bond between the two (London, P. 86-87 ) However, now that Thornton is passed on there is nothing stopping Buck from joining the wolf pack that he long desires to be a part of. That is where the story ends, with Buck going off to be a part of the wild that has changed his life forever.

This story of love with kindness between Thornton and Buck is the true merit of the book. It is this driving message that Buck’s personality changed with violence and again with love that drives the readers to consume all the pages that London has to offer. It is also the notion that apparently changed society. The love shown here is an example that “Love is the only way to combat this return to our most primitive and vicious instincts” (Rogers, 2018). Animals have the instinct to protect themselves, exactly as Buck did when he was kidnapped. It is the human’s duty to show that animal love to prevent it from being the savage natured thing it naturally will become in the face of violence. London’s story speaks directly to this through the change in Buck when
shown love from Thornton. It is an example of how no animal is too far gone for pure love to save.

**Animal Farm:**

*Animal farm* was written by George Orwell and published in 1945. Which was an interesting time for the world. In the United States, Harry Truman becomes President, in the rest of the world, Adolf Hitler and his wife commit suicide, Hiroshima is bombed, and the USS Indianapolis was sunk by a Japanese Submarine (Pearson, 2019). With the recent fall of Hitler and the eminent completion of World War Two along with the rise of Soviet Russia and subsequently the Cold War *Animal Farm* was a timely piece that is “an insightful and very relevant examination of human nature as well as social behavior and political systems” (Westwood, 2010). Human nature being the focus of this portion of the thesis, specifically how human nature interacts with the animals portrayed in the book. With the story line being animals that take over a farm from corrupt humans with the intentions of running the operation in a fair and equal society. This is a direct parallel to what was happening within worldwide politics throughout World War Two and the Cold War. The rise of Hitler in Germany was based on this notion as well as the rise of Stalin in Russia which lead to the Cold War. Just like these two society’s showed the world over time; the notion of an entirely equal and fair society apparently does not work in the real world. The reason for this is easily rationalized as being the corruption of the human mind and soul. Ironically these same human corruptions are also present in the animals a few years after they take over the farm.

Old Major is an old pig that is tired of living under the rule of a human that has plenty of flaws which make him viewed as an unfair leader of the farm. Old major
addresses the rest of the arm animals to ask them to join him in his idealistic dream. He makes a speech to the animals where he says some interesting things about humans and the animal perception of them. One of such quotes is: “Man is the only creature that consumes without producing. He does not give milk, he does not lay eggs, he is too weak to pull the plough, he cannot run fast enough to catch rabbits. Yet he is lord of all the animals” (Orwell, P. 7-8). Here Old major is making quite the observation about what humans bring to the table of farming culture. From an animal perspective it can be easy to see that all humans do is demand things that they, themselves, are unable to produce. More than demanding the things that these animals are producing; the humans also consume the products from the animals. This can be seen as unfair because the animals worked hard to produce these products that they are having taken from them by the humans without any form of gratitude, just demands for more. The last bit of this quote is the most telling of the animals’ impressions of humans as a whole; that they are the lord of all animals. The term “lord” is an interesting choice of words because the official definition of the term “lord” as a noun is “someone or something having power, authority, or influence; a master or ruler” (google dictionary). However, the definition of “lord” when it is used as a verb, like in the statement made by Old Major, the definition is “act in a superior and domineering manner toward someone” (google dictionary). The difference in using the term “lord” as a verb versus a noun is a key part of this quote. It gives an entirely different connotation to the statement that is being made. Instead of referring to humans as someone in power with influence it is referring to them as a superior and domineering person that is in control of the animals on the farm. However, this is only part of the speech that is given to the farm animals to
convince them to rebel against the human ruler of the farm. The most telling part of Old Major's speech is “Is it not crystal clear, then, comrades, that all the evils of this life of ours spring from the tyranny of human beings? Only get rid of Man, and the produce of our labour would be our own” (Orwell, P. 9). Right here. This is the catalyst of the speech and the part that convinces the animals that maybe Old Major's idea really isn't that bad. This is the same notion that allowed Hitler to win over the German minds while he was convincing them to take over society and murder the people who were not approved to be in the new society that was being made. He makes this statement in his book, Mein Kampf: “The end is not only the end of the freedom of the peoples oppressed by the Jew, but also the end of this parasite upon the nations” (Hitler, P. 293-296). Exploring the basic idea of both quotes it is uncovered that the basic principle is that without a certain group of a society, either the farm or Germany, certain members of that society, the animals or the Germans, would benefit more from the fruits of labor. This is a very powerful idea that is some of the first historical impressions present within the story.

As the story continues there is more historical references mentioned by Orwell. Eventually, Old Major passes on and he is unable to see the fruitions of his compelling speech and start of an animal revolution. Eventually the animals have been living with the ideas of Old Major for a while and the pigs have risen to the leadership over all the farm. They become very arrogant in their rule and during a speech a pig mentions how Napoleon, the pig leader over the animals, feels about the rhetoric Old Major brought up and how elections should be run. “No one believes more firmly than Comrade Napoleon that all animals are equal. He would be only too happy to let you make your decisions
for yourselves. But sometimes you might make the wrong decisions, comrades, and then where should we be?” (Orwell, P. 55). This is a classic rhetoric statement about how one person in charge can know what is best for the entire community. By saying a kind sentence right before the main punch line, it gets the audience hooked on the positive and ignoring the negative statement that was made immediately after. Here the kind sentence is that Napoleon believes the most out of anyone that all the animals are equal. This is a nice statement that makes the animals feel good. Very shortly after this statement he mentions how sometimes the animals make the “wrong” decisions and that this would lead to a bad thing. Overall, the implication is that the high society pigs are making decisions for the other farm animals to prevent a “wrong decision” from being made. Stalin made a very similar quote, “It is enough that the people know there was an election. The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes decide everything” (Stalin). This can be interpreted as the people who are counting the votes are the ones that are influencing where the votes are going. In a similar way that the pigs are describing why they must make decisions for the animals, so they won’t make the wrong choice. The story continues with the rise of the pigs to the ultimate power which is controlling the animals on the farm. From here they begin to mimic the traits that caused the animals to rebel against humans in the first place. The pigs begin to wear clothes and when observed an animal witnessed that “It was a pig walking on his hind legs” (Orwell, P. 132). This is the final step to the pigs taking over full reign over the farm animals just like the humans had originally done at the beginning of the story. Following the historical references and notions that have been riddled throughout this tale Orwell is noting that the idea of an entirely equal and fair society
always ends up with a ruling class and a subordinate class. Exactly how it was like for 
Hitler’s rule in Germany and Stalin’s rule in Russia.

As for the purpose of this thesis, because it is not the historical parallels between 
children’s books and society. It is how society was influenced by children’s books and 
vice versa. *Animal Farm* is a great example of how the ground work of the previous 
children’s books allowed a historical event that is very dramatic and scary to be 
illustrated in such a way that children would understand. World War Two and the Cold 
War left scars on the children of that era. Elizabeth King writes that “people who have 
been exposed to high-level threats (or even non-weapon nuclear disasters like 
Chernobyl) tend to be more sensitive to new and similar threats as they emerge”. This 
sensitivity and the high-threat situation that was ever-present during this time in history 
makes the ability for children to understand what was happening in society was very 
important. *Animal Farm* gave a way for the children to learn about what had happened 
to cause this mass hysteria in a gentle way that would be easy to understand; through 
animals. In fact, Orwell “symbolized everything and used analogies rather than straight 
up saying he disagreed with Stalin’s motives” (Johnson, 2016). This was a way of 
ensuring that he could publish the book in a time and place where he could have been 
killed for such radical thoughts against Stalin, but also to ensure that more readers 
would be able to understand the material. By using animals, he made the point he was 
trying to get across more accessible to children and adults alike. This notion to use 
animals to convey a difficult topic was made possible because of the interactions other 
children’s books had with society and the influence of their animal characters.
Life of Pi:

The last book to be analyzed for how animals are viewed in society over one hundred and fifty years is *Life of Pi* written by Yann Martel. This lovely story is about a young boy and his family who own a zoo in India. The first part of the story the audience follows Pi and his adventures around India with his father at the zoo. This is where he learns a lot about the animals and starts to explore religion in its various forms. However, for the purpose of this analysis the animals are what is important. In part one of the book there is also a very important section that perfectly describes how humans interact with animals and the natural world. The quote reads, “Just beyond the ticket booth Father had painted on a wall in bright red letters the question: DO YOU KNOW WHICH IS THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL IN THE ZOO? An arrow pointed to a small curtain. There were so many eager, curious hands that pulled at the curtain that we had to replace it regularly. Behind it was a mirror” (Martel, P. 31). Showing the local people that visited the zoo that the most dangerous thing that could be shown is a human is an intriguing statement. Especially if the quote is further analyzed for context and language. Like, how long it takes the author to get to the point that the most dangerous animal in the zoo is a human. The author allows time for the reader to start guessing within their own conscious about which animal may be referred to here. After the reader has enough time to think internally about what the author is implying the most dangerous animal is the author shocks the reader by simply stating that behind the curtain was a mirror to show that humans are the most dangerous animal that can be displayed at the zoo. This idea that humans are the most dangerous animal is not singularly thought by Martel, in fact National Geographic performed a study and found
that “Lethal violence increased over the course of mammal evolution. While only about
0.3 percent of all mammals die in conflict with members of their own species, that rate is
six-fold higher, or about 2 percent, for primates” (Engelhaupt, 2016). Primates here
referring to the notion that all humans came from a single primate ancestor while
evolution was creating humanity. As it stands today, these “primates” have the highest
propensity for violence amongst themselves. The rate of violence for humans fighting
other humans is six times greater than other mammals fighting other members of their
own species. Going further into the quote from Martel the affect of humans on the
natural world is astonishing. Looking at how humans have been impacting extinction
rates is very interesting, in fact Bill Freedman and Laurie Duncan state, “species
threatened by human activities are becoming extinct at a rate that far exceeds the pace
of extinction throughout most of geologic history” (2002). This is stating that humans are
causign an alarming extinction rate around the world. There are many ways that
humans are accelerating the impact of extinction. The article mentions that humans are
using unsustainable hunting tactics, hunting for large trophies and predators,
introducing non-native species into an ecosystem, and habitat destruction. All these
impacts that humans have on earth can be directly related to loss of animals around the
world. Therefore, it is not an outlandish statement for Martel to be making to describe
humans as the most dangerous animal in the zoo.

Eventually the audience is taken onto a boat that is filled with all these animals.
Unfortunately, the boat ends up sinking, leaving little Pi on a lifeboat with a tiger. Other
animals begin to surface from the wreckage and join the two drifters on the small life
raft. All seeming to understand that they are just trying to survive this ordeal. As each
animal comes onto the boat Pi describes a small life story to accompany the animal. When an older Orangutan comes onto the boat the audience gets a heart breaking tale about a family that accepted this animal as a baby, raised it to live with them then when the Orangutan got older and harder for the family to handle they packed her up, drove into the forest and left her there to fend for herself. Pi describes how the animal feels in this situation, “It has been left behind. The pet does not understand. It is as unprepared for this jungle as its human siblings are. It waits around for their return, trying to quell the panic rising in it. They do not return” (Martel, P. 129). This animal that had been loved and cared for all its life is unprepared for the wilds of the outside world. When it is abandoned the animal will wait in that spot for the humans to return to it. However, when the humans never return the animal must try to fend for itself which does not usually end well for the animal. It is inhumane to abandon the animal because “many owners won’t realize that by abandoning their pets they put them at risk of death” (Campbell, 2017). Especially the abandonment that is discussed in this section of the book. When an animal is abandoned on the streets, or the jungle in this case, that animal has no idea how to live in this new environment. They may attempt to try and keep themselves alive, but it will be difficult when there is no notion as to what hunting is or how to accomplish such a thing. Most of these animals will starve before another human comes along to take care of them.

In the final section of the book Pi is talking to two men about what animals fear the most. He says; “What you don't realize is that we are a strange and forbidding species to wild animals. We fill them with fear. They avoid as much as possible. It took centuries to still the fear in some pliable animals – domestication it's called – but most
cannot get over their fear, and I doubt they ever will. When wild animals fight us, it is out of sheer desperation. They fight when they feel they have no other way out. It's a very last resort” (Martel, P. 296). This is the central part of the book. The main message that it is trying to deliver to the audience that animals fear us more than then we fear them. That an animal does what it can to protect itself from the dangers that humans pose onto them. The term “forbidding” in the start of the sentence gives the reader a sense of guilt about the ideas that animals have regarding humans. In this context it means, “unfriendly or threatening in appearance” (google dictionary). Which is a reasonable fear for animals to have seeing how humans have impacted their lives, environment, and well-being over the years.

Conclusion:

Animals have been a part of literature for a long time. The idea of how animals have been viewed by society over 150 years has changed within the selected books. Starting off with Black Beauty the animals were initially viewed to be working animals that had no feelings or emotions. They were born, they worked, and then they died. This all changed when Anna Sewell published Black Beauty. Suddenly animal had thoughts and feelings of their own. The book was passed around to bring awareness to animals having these complex emotions. A similar thing was done with dogs in Jack London’s take The Call of the Wild. Where the story was written from the perspective of a dog named Buck to show that animals can be abused and mistreated for a long time but given the right amount of love, they will love back with all their heart. It was a lovely story that displayed resilience among Man’s Best Friend. Then we got to Animal Farm by George Orwell who showed that animals have been given so much emotion and
human qualities over the years that they are now able to be used as an educational tool for children. Also, that they can parallel current events and be used to discuss difficult topics in history with ease. Lastly, *Life of Pi* brought us to the realization that humans have an impact on this earth and the wild animals that also call this place home. The idea that these animals have been conditioned to fear humans based on the interactions over their evolutionary history is a profound one that holds merit. All these books describe animals in their own and when put together it is clear that the idea of animals within society has changed over one hundred and fifty years because the way, purpose, and type of animals discussed in each book has changed and elaborated on the lessons taught from the books before it.


16. Google Search, Google, www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS702US702&ei=uipcXMXQNqnv_QaBsr8Y&q=black beauty anna sewell published&oq=black beauty anna sewell published&gs_l=psy-ab.3..0i22i30.990.2509..2575...0.0..0.112.820.7j2......0....1..gws-wiz.......0i67j0.tMI70zuuy88.


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